

**GRACEMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 9 MAY 2011



Present:

Pauline Walker	<i>Head Teacher</i>
Ken Gregor	<i>Chair</i>
Ian Duncan	<i>Parent Member (Treasurer)</i>
Chris Hume	<i>Staff Member</i>
Beth Gregor	<i>Pupil Member</i>
Alun Williams	<i>Inspector, Howdenhall Lothian and Borders Police</i>
Ashleigh Kennedy	<i>Clerk</i>

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Inspector Alun Williams from Lothian and Borders Police who was present to discuss the polices' relationship with the school. He also introduced Beth Gregor who was present to discuss pupil issues and to give an update on the Pupil Council.

Apologies were received from Lesley Gibson-Eaglesham, Deputy Chair.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There was one change from the Minutes from the last meeting held on Monday 21 March 2011. In Item 8 *Facebook Update* the following change was made: 'the Easter newsletter had went out to parents' to 'the Easter newsletter had gone out to parents'.

The Minutes were then approved.

3. Report from Chair

a. Parent Council Membership

Ken reported that Gwen McLeod had resigned from the Parent Council due to an issue with the school. Ian asked if she could be asked to reconsider as she had done a great job on the Parent Council. Ken concurred and added that he had made it clear to her she would be welcome back at anytime.

Ken also reported that the co-opted member Bob Perry had been in touch and due to work commitments could not be part of the Parent Council anymore. He informed members that Pauline was to write to Bob on behalf of the school to thank him for his efforts as he had been involved in the school for a long time. Ken also asked members to put some thought into who his replacement could be. A co-opted member is one who has no active involvement with the School but should have an interest in the Schools progress and who can give an outside view of the school.

b. Police Involvement

Ken was pleased to report that discussions had taken place between Pauline, Alun Williams and himself regarding a formal link between the school and the local police. Ken reminded members that at the last meeting Cllr Norma Hart had indicated she would write to Lothian and Borders police to enquire how School Link Officers were assigned and if Gracemount could be given one. She had been in contact with Alun Williams. The outcome of this communication had been a proposal by Alun to forge a formal link between the school and the police. This would be discussed by Alun later in the meeting.

Ken concluded this section by stating that this process has shown the importance of the Parent Council role in adding to the school's development and making a difference. In this case by bringing the School and the Police Safer Neighbourhood team together.

c. Budget Cut Update

Ken reported that there would be a likelihood that the proposal of 'Management Delaying' put forward by the City of Edinburgh Council was to go ahead. Ken felt that although it was not a surprise it was not great for the school. Ian asked why this area had been kept quiet as he felt that he had not had any communication regarding this. Pauline explained that the full extent of the decisions could not be communicated until the HR process had been sorted. Ken explained that Pauline would give as much information as she could in her report later in the meeting.

d. Learning Festival

Ken informed members that there was a Learning Festival taking place at Craigroyston High School on Saturday 14 May 2011. There would be demonstrations on various forms of teaching. The School would be representing the cluster. Pauline would also be attending. If anyone was interested they could attend between 10 and 1pm.

4. Report from Treasurer

Ian reported that the balance for the Parent Council account was £612.04 with £0.05 interest in April. He had received a 7 month statement from the Bank that morning.

Ian reported that the £10 top up payment given to Ashleigh to increase her Clerk payment from £40 to £50 had cleared on 3 May. Ken explained to the Council that Ashleigh had not received this additional £10. Ian apologised to Ashleigh on behalf of the Parent Council and Ken informed members that he was in contact with the Parental Involvement Unit to rectify this.

Ian also confirmed that next year's Parent Council funding of £560.80 would be paid by BACS payment on 2 June 2011.

5. Report from Pupil Member

Ken welcomed Beth to the meeting. She was there to discuss what the Pupil Council had been doing this year. The Pupil Council met with Chris Hume, every 2 – 3 weeks to discuss pupil issues. The biggest issue to be resolved was that hoodies were now part of the school uniform. The Pupil Council has a good relationship with the Senior Management Team and Janitors and recently the toilets had been cleaned and painted.

Chris informed members that an assembly on the Pupil Council had been held recently and a survey had been created. The Pupil Council's improvement plan was also discussed with Pauline recently who includes 16 points. Chris indicated that they were waiting for the seniors to come back from exam leave before moving forward and an election for members would be held early next year. Ken asked Chris if there was anything from the 16 action points that stood out. Chris explained that 8 points were for improving the Pupil Council and 8 for improving the School. Chris was aware of the lack of money and how this could affect potential action points such as replacing the wooden benches outside. Ken suggested that with a new Tesco opening in the

area there was perhaps an opportunity for them to get involved with some funding or contributions.

Pauline commented that the Pupil Council was very good with sorting out issues such as encouraging recycling batteries and plastic. She is proud that the Pupil Council has a high profile city wide.

Chris suggested that the Pupil Council Minutes could be forwarded to the Parent Council for information. Ken welcomed Chris' suggestion.

Ken thanked Beth's contributions to this section of the meeting.

6. Report from Head Teacher

a. Improvement Planning

Pauline reported that since January members of staff had been asked for their opinions on the School Improvement Plan. Currently a group was busy planning on what would be included in next year's Improvement Plan. Pauline was confident that views from across the school community would be heard and there would be a shared vision to where the school is going. She wished to thank everyone for their input.

b. Flag Pole

Pauline had received a quote for a flag pole for the Eco flag of £3000. Currently it was hanging from the balcony inside the school. She had lobbied AMEY as Gracemount is their only school with an Eco flag. She managed to reduce the school's contribution to £380 with AMEY covering the rest. Planning permission was also needed to erect the pole. The flag would be seen from the road and create a positive community image for the school. Ian asked if there were any deterrents to ensure the flag was not stolen. Pauline explained that the pole would be anti-theft and be positioned underneath a CCTV camera.

c. Post appeal results

Pauline told members that the more palatable and simpler FIFE reports on appeals would be released on Friday. She indicated that there would be few changes in terms of grade movement. An update on the appeals would be given at the next meeting.

d. Budget

The 2010 – 2011 financial year had recently ended and Pauline was pleased to report that the school budget was in the black, however, budget constraints had been much tighter than before. She predicted that the school would be £10,000 to £25,000 in the black. Ian congratulated Pauline on this success amid the economic climate. Pauline stated that the new significantly reduced budget for the financial year had been given on 1 April 2011.

This was happening amidst a background of management restructuring within Edinburgh schools. Currently Pauline could only report that she had spoken to all Heads of Departments but could not share the restructuring process with the Parent Council. She intimated that the interviews would take place for the new positions in the next 8 weeks up to the end of the summer term for implementation in August. She would be able to comment on this at the next Parent Council meeting in June.

Pauline explained that she had begun to look at staffing for the next school year. She explained that Lindsay Duncanson, a Mathematics teacher had confirmed her retirement at the end of the summer term. Pauline was due to conduct interviews for her vacant post that week.

e. Exams

Pauline reported that the exam diet was in full swing. Ian intimated that he felt there was an issue with the Intermediate 2 Music practical exam. Pauline explained that she would look into this and let him know.

7. Report from Alun Williams, Inspector Lothian and Borders Police

Alun began his report to members by explaining that he had been the Inspector at Howdenhall, the local police station for 2 years. His responsibilities for the area included community issues, complaints and neighbourhood partnerships. The funding for his area came from central and local authority governments. He manages 2 sergeants and 17 constables and is accountable to the City of Edinburgh Council, the Police Executive and the Public.

Alun explained that his first contact with the Parent Council came when Ken had contacted him with regards to the Edinburgh Evening News article in August 2010. Alun intimated that the school has comparatively low crime in relation to ASBOs and bullying and he had no issues with the school. Further conversations with the Parent Council had led to the suggestion of a School Link Officer. Due to funding, Alun

could not give this to the school. However, he is eager to have a formal link with the school and to build a police presence in the school.

He continued by stating a meeting had taken place between Ken and Pauline and he had committed 1 officer, Carol Menzies and 2 additional officers for support, Dawn McCulloch and Jamie Toll to be a formal contact with the school. Carol already attended Pupil Support Groups (PSG) within the school and he wanted there to be an attempt to put in a presence in and around the school other than when there had been a call. Pauline confirmed that she had given Alun authorisation for his officers to come into the School, visit classes and to attend assemblies and to play a part in School life. Alun felt that this offer from the school was fantastic and any ideas from members to extend his role would be welcome. He believed this role would evolve over time and was meeting Pauline and Ken in July to discuss the initial stages. In addition the Senior Management Team has been invited to go out with officers on patrol after school to see what is going on in the community.

Pauline commented that from the school's perspective this was a great initiative and it would benefit the school and police. Ian asked Alun if the officers were experienced enough to take on this role. Alun responded that Carol had worked in the community for 5 years and was remarkably enthusiastic and upbeat. He explained that the 2 officers that would support Carol were younger. However, Dawn was involved in this to develop her practice and Jamie had many positive ideas. Ian also asked if Alun was to move on would the link be expected to stay. Alun explained that they Chief Constable had made a commitment to this type of policing and this would be part of daily business regardless of who was the Inspector at Howdenhall. Chris intimated that he would explain this new relationship to the Pupil Council and invite Carol to a Pupil Council Meeting

Ken confirmed that part of this initiative would mean that there would be regular attendance at Parent Council meetings by one of the Officers. He suggested that the important part of this initiative was that it would break down barriers and build relationships between the Police, School and Pupils and that the presence of a Police Officer in the School would be seen as something normal and would not mean that something was wrong. Ken concluded this section by thanking Alun for attending.

8. Issues from Staff/Pupils/Parents

a. Staff

There were no issues from staff.

b. Pupils

There were no issues from pupils.

c. Parents

There were no issues from parents.

9. Any Other Business

Ken asked all members to consider appropriate dates for Meetings during the 2011-2012 School year.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 20 June 2011.